| | | (Rs. Crores) |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | Equity share capital | Rs. 4,889.95 |
| (ii) | 7% Non-cumulative redeemable preference share capital | Rs. 2,937.47 |
| | | Rs. 7,827.42 |

(b) Apart from share capital, Government has no other investments in Visakhapatnam Steel Plant.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) No specific exercise has been made to assess the present value of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. However, as per the audited accounts, the net worth of the Company as on 31st March 2005, is Rs. 6,878.31 crores.

**Procurement of materials by South East Central Railway**

†*257. SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the zonal headquarters of South-East Central Railway located at Bilaspur has been fully empowered to procure various materials to be used in the said zone;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor and by when such powers will be delegated;

(c) whether any preference will be given to the State industries in the procurement of various materials to be used in this Zone, and initiative will be taken by the Railways for setting up the industry producing such materials in case such industries are not in existence at present; and

(d) whether this zone has approached the Government of Chhattisgarh in this regard, if so, when and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir. The General Manager of South-East Railway, Bilaspur has been delegated financial powers up to Rs. 15 crore for procurement of stores on par with the General Managers of other Zonal Railways. When the procurement value of stores exceeds Rs. 15 crore, purchases are approved by the Railway Board/Minister of State for Railways/Minister of Railways.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) The powers already delegated are considered adequate.

(c) The Ministry of Railways follows the guidelines of the purchase policy of the Government of India for procurement of materials. Purchase preference is given to the Central Public Sector Enterprises as per purchase policy of Government of India. Further, Ministry of Railways currently has no plans for setting up of industries for sourcing of materials required by Railways.

(d) Does not arise.

**PM's Task Force on Drug Prices**

*258. DR. KARAN SINGH:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether PM's Task Force on making the medicines affordable has asked Government to cut by half the 16 per cent excise duty levied on retail price of medicines;

(b) whether the excise duty is currently levied at 60 per cent of retail price;

(c) whether the final report submitted by the Task Force also states that ceiling prices should be fixed for 314 essential ingredients taken from a list of 354 prepared by the Health Ministry; and

(d) whether drugs with 70 per cent market share would be de-branded?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (d) A Task Force under the Chairmanship of Dr. Pronab Sen, Principal Adviser, Planning Commission was constituted to explore options other than price control to make available life saving drugs at reasonable prices. The Task Force has submitted its report to the Government on the 20th September, 2005. The Task Force has recommended in its final report that the excise duty on all pharmaceutical products should be reduced from 16 to 8 per cent.